

EMERGENCY STUDENT LOAN
CONSOLIDATION ACT OF 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. BILL LUTHER

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 21, 1997

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 2535 because I am very concerned that our higher education graduates are in need of greater assistance as they consolidate their student loan debts after graduation and begin the process of repayment.

Currently there is a backlog of between 80,000 to 86,000 student loan consolidation applications at the U.S. Department of Education. Graduates need this tool to effectively manage school debt, while at the same time embarking on their careers and often starting families. The consolidation program was enacted originally in 1993 as an initiative of the Clinton administration. The concept was good then, and it's good now, and with H.R. 2535, borrowers will be able to consolidate their loans with guarantee agencies and private lenders.

I want to thank subcommittee Chairman MCKEON and ranking member KILDEE for bringing this legislation to the floor in a timely fashion. I'm also pleased with the bipartisan approach to this issue. Helping people attain a higher education, and providing support for the repayment of the debt accumulated in the pursuit of that education, is a shared goal. Again, thanks to all involved in this effort, and I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

DEMOCRACY IN COLOMBIA

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 29, 1997

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, on October 26, 1997, Colombia attempted to conduct nationwide municipal elections despite the deadly impact of guerrilla scare tactics on voter turnout and candidate participation. The municipal elections in Colombia were marred by a brutal campaign of violence, kidnapping, and extortion carried out by the guerrilla movements of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia [FARC] and the National Liberation Army [ELN]. While the electoral process may have succeeded in the urban areas, the lack of participation in the rural sectors reflects the serious threat to the democratic process posed by the guerrilla war.

Through the deadly efforts of the FARC and ELN, 40 political candidates were murdered; over 1,900 candidates were forced to abandon their campaigns; nearly 120 municipalities had candidates reluctantly running; and 11 municipalities had no candidates at all. The situation continued to deteriorate during the week before the elections when FARC and ELN terrorist activities escalated into a national crisis with the kidnapping of international election observers from the OAS and a declaration of an armed strike in order to impede public transportation during the crucial time of the elections.

Largely responsible for the escalation of FARC and the ELN activities over the last

couple of years is the increase in funding from narcotics trafficking. This has enabled both guerrilla elements to effectively quadruple their power base over the past 7 years so that it is now estimated that they control up to 40 percent of the territory of Colombia.

It is clear that the leaders of the FARC and ELN have resisted all overtures by the Government of Colombia to end the violence and establish peace. With nearly 70,000 people dead as a direct result of the guerrilla war in the last decade, it is past time to find a solution to this crisis. As reflected in the recent municipal elections, the campaign of the FARC and ELN now present a direct threat to the very democracy of Colombia and stability to the region.

In response to the critical situation in Colombia, I am introducing legislation that would:

First, recognize the importance of the threat of the guerrilla movement to Colombia's democracy and that the acts of violence to disrupt the electoral process in the municipal elections could spill over to the congressional and presidential elections to be held in 1998;

Second, urge the guerrilla leaders of the FARC and ELN to end the violence and sever their relationship with narcotics traffickers; negotiate a peace accord with the Government of Colombia and to take their agenda into the political arena for debate;

Third, call upon the international community, particularly the Organization of American States, to continue to play a more pro-active role in resolving the conflict; and

Fourth, urge the administration to reevaluate United States policies toward Colombia taking into account the threat of the guerrilla movement to Colombia's democracy, and to encourage a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Mr. Speaker, Colombia's democracy is one of the oldest and most important democracies in the hemisphere. It is critical for the stability of the hemisphere that this guerrilla movement, like all the others in the region, come to an end. Peace, political stability, and economic prosperity must be given the highest priority for all nations.

HONORING THE CENTER FOR
INDEPENDENT LIVING**HON. RONALD V. DELLUMS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 29, 1997

Mr. DELLUMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the Center for Independent Living's 25th anniversary. It is appropriate at this time to highlight its many achievements and to underscore the positive impact that it has made in the local community.

The Center for Independent Living, the first of its kind, was established in 1972 for the purpose of allowing people with disabilities to live independently, to attain their productive potential, and to participate fully in all aspects of society. Throughout its history, the Center for Independent Living has played a pioneering role in advocating architectural changes to make the community more physically accessible, instructing in techniques of independent living, and offering a core of essential services. This comprehensive package of services to help people with disabilities is offered in the belief that it is the most effective way to serve

clients who have complex and interconnected needs.

Currently there are 30 Centers for Independent Living throughout California, and over 300 throughout the country, which are modeled after the Center for Independent Living in Berkeley. The services that it offers include advocacy, attendant referral, blind services, deaf services, employment services, peer support services, youth services, services for people with mental disabilities, independent living skills information and referral, a client enhancement and empowerment project, and housing. Berkeley's Center for Independent Living has increased the quality of life for thousands of people with disabilities, independent living has increased the quality of life for thousands of people with disabilities locally, nationally, and internationally, and was involved in the passage of the 504 Act of 1973, State title XXIV, and the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990.

The Center for Independent Living has brought national and international attention to the state of California and the Nation as a leader in assuring access to people with disabilities, I commend the Center for Independent Living for all its hard work, dedication, and commitment to our community as well as to the Nation.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO EN-
COURAGE THE SALE OF LARGE
PLEASURE BOATS**HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 29, 1997

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a bill that would greatly enhance the international yachting industry in the United States.

Most people are unaware how the sale or even the mere presence of large foreign-owned pleasure boats docked at a domestic port contributes to the local economy. A single large luxury boat can literally pump tens of thousands of dollars into the local economy a month. For example, the cost of supporting a crew, docking fees, boat repairs, supplies, and other related expenditures while the boat is moored at a domestic marina all help the economy and create jobs. Attracting these types of vessels to our shores is therefore beneficial to the economy. In fact, in my congressional district, a significant segment of the local economy is based on the recreational boating trade and its attendant services.

Unfortunately, current law and customs regulations as applied to large yachts have the unintended consequence of discouraging the sale of these vessels domestically. This is primarily for two reasons. First, when the yacht is imported into the United States for sale, the duty must be paid immediately, whether the yacht is eventually sold or not. This requirement is onerous for the yacht seller, because if the yacht is not sold, he or she cannot get a timely or full refund of the duty. This is due to the lengthy procedure—9 months to a year—that the Customs Service administrative process takes. If the value of the yacht exceeds \$1 million, the loss of funds to the seller can be quite substantial.

Second, there is an old maxim among boaters that "every boat is for sale." Consider this